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## VICTORY GARDENS IN 1945



Statement by Claude R. Wickard, Secretary of Agriculture. Recorded December 22, 1944. Time 4 minutes, 25 seconds (without announcer's introduction).

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ANNOUNCER: (LIVE)

From the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., a visit by transcription with Claude R. Wickard, Secretary of Agriculture. Secretary Wickard will be introduced by Ernie Moore, manager of the Victory Garden program for the Department of Agriculture.

TRANSCRIPTION:

ERNIE MOORE: Secretary Wickard, I'm awfully glad to have you here today, because I know a lot of people are wondering whether or not to grow a garden this year. When people ask you that question, what do you say?

SECRETARY WICKARD:

I tell them that Victory gardens are going to be just as important this year as they were last year. Victory gardening is more than a patriotic hobby; it is a wartime necessity and a vital part of our food program. We should not forget that food is still a vital war weapon, and a powerful peace force. That is why farm and city people alike are being asked to grow Victory gardens again this year.

There is every reason to believe that food will be just as important a factor this year in winning the war as it was in 1944. To support offensive military action on the global scale that our forces are fighting takes more food just as it takes more ammunition. And whenever we are able to start demobilizing fighters -- they -- as civilians -- will continue to consume a lot of food. Furthermore, our regular civilian population, which has eaten better during the war than before it, would like to buy even more food. Also, lend-lease demand for U.S. food continues large, and foreign relief needs may be larger than last year. All of these requirements for our food add up to a big food-production job for 1945.

At this crucial stage of the war we must not lose sight of the fact that food can be a tremendously important factor in winning the peace just as it is in winning the war.

The 1945 production goals call for about the same output of food as in 1944. And it looks now as though we'll need about as many Victory gardens this year as last year, when agriculture's reserve troops produced nearly 19 million gardens. About a third of those gardens were on farms. The other two-thirds were in town, cities, and suburban areas. These rural and urban home gardeners supplied more than 40 percent of the 1944 fresh vegetable crop.

ERNIE MOORE:

Secretary Wickard, don't you have a word of encouragement for the home canners?

SECRETARY WICKARD:

I certainly do.

Indications are that more than two-thirds of the Nation's housewives have done some home canning or other form of home food preservation in each of the last two years. That is a fine record, and I hope it will be continued in 1945.

In addition to helping the wartime food situation, Victory gardening and home canning provide better vegetables both in summer and winter, enable the family to save money on the food bill and to save ration points. Also, growing vegetables at home helps to lighten the burdens of transportation and distribution systems during war.

Aside from the many practical reasons for continuing to grow Victory gardens this year, there is a lot of satisfaction in gardening. The sheer enjoyment of getting out in the fresh air and sunshine is a real tonic for most people who live in towns and cities. All of us, farm and city people alike, enjoy seeing things grow. And the time of greatest enjoyment comes when we sit down to the table to eat the foods we have grown. That superb, vine-ripened taste alone is reward enough for gardening. But with a war on, the patriotic reasons make gardening even more important.

So I hope that everybody who has access to a suitable plot of ground will grow a garden this year.

Many organizations --- national, State, and local --- have made valuable contributions to the Victory garden programs of the last three years. I am sure we can continue to count on their helpful support in 1945.

Though all of us can't dig fox holes over there, we can still dig -- in our gardens over here -- for victory.

MOORE:

Thank you very much, Secretary Wickard.

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